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Letter dated 19 September 2016 from the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to forward to you materials related to the implementation of the agreement on Syria between the Russian Federation and the United States of 9 September 2016 (see annexes).

I should be grateful if you would circulate the present letter and its annexes as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Vitaly **Churkin**

16-16494 (E) 270916 270916

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Annex I to the letter dated 19 September 2016 from the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

[Original: Russian]

Minutes of the video conference on the seventh day of cessation of hostilities in the Syrian Arab Republic

Location: National defence control centre, conference room

Time: 1400-1415 hours, 19 September 2016

Statement by the Chief of the Main Intelligence Unit of the General Staff of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation

Good afternoon,

(On screen: slide No. 1 — number of reconciled settlements)

In accordance with the Russian-United States agreements, a cessation of hostilities has been in effect in Syria for seven days: since 1900 hours, 12 September. It should be noted that the ceasefire has not been maintained during that period.

Over the past 24 hours alone, armed groups have fired 53 times. Since the cessation of hostilities was first announced, it has been violated 302 times by the opposition. During this period, 63 civilians have been killed and 252 injured; the Syrian Armed Forces have suffered 153 casualties.

(On screen: slide No. 2 — video recording of shellfire over the week)

On the screen are video recordings of fighters shelling residential neighbourhoods and the positions of Government forces in Aleppo, Ladhiqiyah and Damascus over the period that the cessation of hostilities has been in effect. There is ample such documentary evidence.

For objective monitoring of the cessation of hostilities, the Russian Ministry of Defence has set up four webcams in Aleppo and an unmanned aerial vehicle remains in constant operation for real-time monitoring of the situation.

Russia and Syria have fulfilled all their commitments in accordance with the agreements reached in Geneva on 9 September. At the request of the United States, we are not disclosing their content. I will confine my remarks only to the main points.

First, firing at armed groups in territories subject to the agreement has been completely discontinued.

In this regard, I find it necessary to respond to the groundless accusations of United States Secretary of State John Kerry regarding so-called "indiscriminate bombings" by Syrian aviation. Neither Russian nor Syrian air forces have carried

out any air strikes in the areas covered by the Geneva agreements over the past week. No evidence to the contrary has been submitted to us.

Second, a checkpoint has been set up west of the Castello road for the flow of humanitarian assistance and civilian transport. The checkpoint has been transferred to representatives of the Syrian Red Crescent, with protection organized by the Bustan and Shield people's militia.

(On screen: slide No. 3 — video of forces withdrawal)

Third, heavy weaponry, equipment and government forces were twice withdrawn from that road to the distances stipulated by the agreement. However, owing to provocations and the reluctance of the opposition to withdraw in kind, implementation of this part of the agreement was disrupted.

Fourth, Russia and Syria are taking steps to ensure that United Nations humanitarian convoys reach the most needy areas of the country. Today the delivery of two humanitarian convoys is under way to various locations in the Syrian Arab Republic.

(On screen: slide No. 4 — map of Aleppo with checkpoint in eastern part)

The issue of security for humanitarian convoys travelling to the eastern part of Aleppo remains unresolved. This is because armed units under United States control have not set up a checkpoint on the eastern part of the Castello road, nor have they transferred the checkpoint to the Syrian Red Crescent Society. Troops, weapons and equipment have also not been withdrawn from the Castello road.

The impression is that this situation was artificially created by our American partners to blame Russia and Syria for disrupting the delivery of humanitarian assistance. However, the Russian Federation has repeatedly called on all countries to combine their efforts in conducting humanitarian operations in Syria and specifically in Aleppo.

At today's video conference is a representative from the Ministry of Defence of the Russian Federation who is involved in task forces on the ceasefire and humanitarian issues in Geneva, Colonel Alexander Sergeevich Zorin. He will report on the negotiations with our American partners regarding implementation of the provisions of the Russian and United States agreements of 9 September. Please deliver your report, Sir.

Report of Colonel Zorin

(On screen — Colonel Zorin)

Lieutenant General,

The Geneva operational response centre is continuing to work to monitor compliance by the opposing parties in Syria with the agreements reached between Russia and the United States on 9 September 2016.

We are forced to note an extremely low level of response by American counterparts to our legitimate concerns. In particular, since the first day of the truce,

12 September 2016, we have conveyed 16 requests to the Americans for information:

- On areas controlled by terrorist groups;
- On plans for the opposition groups to withdraw from Castello routes;
- On organizing a 24-hour hotline between the centre for reconciliation in Humaymim and American partners;
- On investigating violations of the cessation of hostilities by the opposition.

I wish to stress that our interest in these issues is purely practical in nature. It relates to the need to separate the Nusrah Front and the moderate opposition, which is seen as the main condition for securing the truce. I would note that the joint statement of Russia and the United States on the cessation of hostilities in Syria, dated 22 February 2016, states that our countries will work together, as appropriate, to delineate the territory held by Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), the Nusrah Front and other terrorist organizations designated by the United Nations Security Council. Unfortunately, our American colleagues have still not taken any tangible steps in that direction.

During meetings at the Geneva centre yesterday and today, the Americans have tried to convince us that it is an extremely difficult task to separate terrorists and the opposition, and that they are working hard to address this. However, this work has not yielded any practical results to date.

Throughout the week, contacts have also been maintained to discuss the situation along the Castello road. According to the information that United Nations representatives reiterated to us today, Castello continues to be regarded as the main transport route for humanitarian convoys to reach eastern Aleppo.

We informed the head of the United States delegation that Russia and Syria had fulfilled the conditions laid down for the demilitarization of the Castello road. However, for some reason this fact only raised the ire of our partners. The timelines for checkpoint deployment by the opposition were not communicated to us. And we have still not received the data requested yesterday for contacts with field commanders to harmonize the withdrawal of parties from the road.

However, Russia provides timely, official and comprehensive replies to address all requests and problems raised by the United States delegation.

Chief of the Main Intelligence Unit of the General Staff of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation

Thank you. Let's turn to reports on the situation on the ground over the past 24 hours. Lieutenant General Savchenko, please deliver your report.

Report of Lieutenant General Savchenko, Head of the Centre for Reconciliation of Opposing Sides

(On screen: slide No. 5 — map of Syria with the number of ceasefire violations)

Lieutenant General,

Since the cessation of hostilities first took effect in Syria, the number of militia attacks on government forces and citizens has been steadily on the increase.

Over the past 24 hours, there have been 53 truce violations by militia units: namely, 26 attacks in Aleppo governorate; 5 in Ladhiqiyah; 8 in Damascus governorate; 5 in Hama; 7 in Homs; and 2 in Dar'a.

(On screen: slide No. 6 — map of Aleppo city with ceasefire violations over the last 24 hours)

Over the past 24 hours, militia fighters in the city of Aleppo alone have fired 24 shells at the neighbourhoods of Ramusah and Zahra' and at areas near the cement factory, the Castello trade centre and the Castello road.

The firing is not only at government troop positions, but also upon residential areas where civilians live. Over the last 24 hours shelling from areas occupied by militia fighters has killed 10 civilians, including two children, and 30 people have been injured.

(On screen: slide No. 7 — map of the situation in Syria, video of formation of illegal armed groups)

Opposition troops in Aleppo and Hama governorates, taking advantage of the ceasefire by Syrian forces, are regrouping, replenishing their ammunition stockpiles and weapons and preparing to take the offensive to seize more territory.

It has been established with certainty that fighters have gathered to take offensive action in the north-east and north-west districts of the city of Hama, and also in south-west and north Aleppo. This has been corroborated by the data received from unmanned aerial vehicles.

However, we are not seeing any attempts by the United States to influence the opposition under their control and to force them to respect the conditions of the Russian-American agreements.

The Russian Centre for Reconciliation of Opposing Sides has sent American colleagues 13 letters describing violations of the cessation of hostilities by armed groups. There has been no reply to any of them.

Moreover, in the past four days, there has been no response from the direct telephone line of the United States military-political group in Geneva.

(On screen: slide no. 8 — video of civilians withdrawing from eastern Aleppo)

Yesterday, the Russian Centre for Reconciliation and the Syrian authorities organized the withdrawal of 200 people from the eastern part of Aleppo city. Another 70 people left the city at night. Another group, also comprising 70 people, was prevented from leaving the city by terrorists. There were fatalities.

(On screen: slide no. 9 — map of Syria with humanitarian convoys)

The issue of the passage of United Nations humanitarian convoys has been addressed in conjunction with the Syrian authorities. Today, United Nations humanitarian supplies are being delivered to Talbisheh and Wa'r in Homs governorate and Urum al-Kubra in Aleppo governorate. The necessary permits have been prepared by the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic and handed over to United Nations representatives.

Preparations are under way to dispatch humanitarian convoys to the settlements of Muaddamiyah, Duma, Zamalka, Madaya and Zabadani in Damascus governorate, and to Fu'ah and Kafr Haya in Idlib governorate.

End of report.

Chief of the Main Intelligence Unit of the General Staff of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation

Thank you.

(On screen: slide no. 10 — map of Syria)

Summing up, we must note the following:

The United States and the so-called "healthy" opposition groups under its control have not fulfilled any of the commitments assumed under the Geneva agreements.

Above all, there has been no separation of the moderate opposition and the Nusrah Front. The information needed for the separation of the territories under the control of ISIL, the Nusrah Front and the so-called "healthy" opposition, transmitted to us by our American partners, does not allow the fight to continue against international terrorist organizations.

Moreover, we are not witnessing a disengagement from, but rather a merger between the moderate opposition forces and the Nusrah Front, and their preparations for joint offensive actions.

The United States is still unable to give us precise data on the deployment locations of the opposition forces under its control. The materials transferred to Russia on 13 September are not consistent with the bilateral arrangements, as they contained only a general list of the groups that have agreed to the cessation of hostilities. They do not specify the coordinates of their areas of operation, their strength, or provide the contact details of the groups' leaders.

As a result, shelling of the positions of Syrian government forces and residential neighbourhoods has continued and soldiers and civilians continue to die.

The reason for this situation is that the United States does not have effective leverage on the moderate opposition and does not know the realities on ground. This is demonstrated by the American missile strike the day before yesterday on Syrian troop positions in the city of Dayr al-Zawr, which was immediately followed by an ISIL offensive.

Given that fighters are not fulfilling the terms of the cessation of hostilities, we consider unilateral compliance with it by the Syrian government forces to be pointless.

Government forces will resume actions to eradicate the Nusrah Front and affiliated radical opposition groups with the support of the Russian Air Force.

Thank you.

Annex II to the letter dated 19 September 2016 from the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

[Original: Russian]

Briefing note on humanitarian assistance to the people of Syria from 12 to 19 September 2016

Since the start of the ceasefire in Syria, United Nations humanitarian assistance has been provided to people in four locations:

To the city of Dayr al-Zawr four times, by IL-76 aircraft of the Russian airline Abakan Air. Parachutes delivered food and basic necessities totalling 87.3 tons;

To Talbisheh and Wa'r (Homs governorate), by 56 vehicles carrying food; and to Urum Al-Kubra, 20 km south-west of Aleppo, by 31 vehicles carrying food (19 September 2016);

The preparations and documents are currently being finalized for humanitarian convoys to another seven locations: Duma and Zamalka (in Arbin); Muhammadiyah al-Shih, Madaya and Zabadani (in Damascus governorate); and Fu'ah and Kafr Haya (in Idlib governorate).

Regarding the planned convoys to eastern Aleppo, the situation remains unchanged due to the lack of security conditions. The start of transportation of the cargo was repeatedly postponed on 20-21 September this year.

The Russian Centre for Reconciliation of Opposing Sides in the Syrian Arab Republic carried out humanitarian actions in the following locations:

In Janajiq (Ladhiqiyah governorate), total weight of humanitarian cargo: 2.24 tons;

In Manzul (Homs governorate), total weight of humanitarian cargo: 2.24 tons;

In Zama (Ladhiqiyah governorate), total weight of humanitarian cargo: 2.24 tons;

In Kafat (Hama governorate), total weight of humanitarian cargo: 2.5 tons.

In addition, humanitarian assistance provided by the Government of the Republic of Belarus was delivered by Russian Ministry of Defence vehicles to the "North" task force warehouse in Aleppo governorate for subsequent distribution to the population of Aleppo city.

On 19 September 2016 a joint humanitarian operation is planned at the University Hospital, Razi Hospital and the Hospital of Cardiovascular Surgery, and humanitarian assistance will be provided to Orphanage No. 1 near Jira (humanitarian assistance for children): totalling 23 tons of cargo.

Most of the cargo is medical equipment and supplies, essentials and foodstuffs. The Russian military are involved in this operation.

Annex III to the letter dated 19 September 2016 from the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

[Original: Russian]

Briefing note on taking people out of militia-controlled areas of Aleppo city

In eastern Aleppo there is growing discontent among civilians about the critical humanitarian situation in the city and atrocities by fighters.

On 17 September 2016 a protest attended by up to 500 persons was held near Karm al-Minsar. The protest was severely repressed by militia fighters. Twenty-six people were killed.

At 1400 hours on 18 September 2016, around 200 civilians, including 2 fighters and 26 children, were taken out of the eastern part of Aleppo with the assistance of experts from the Russian Centre for Reconciliation of Opposing Sides. They were not taken out via the previously designated passage but through the Salah al-Din district. The passage prepared in advance had been closed by Jabhat Fateh al-Sham and mined.

At 1520 hours on 18 September 2016, an attempt was made near Kastol Harami to take out a group of 70 civilians. The people were fired upon by fighters and dispersed. The sharia court in Aleppo announced that all who tried to enter territory controlled by government troops would be shot, irrespective of gender and age.

Leaders of Jabhat Fateh al-Sham are disseminating information that all men who enter areas controlled by government forces will be conscripted into military service and will die.

Despite this, in eastern Aleppo social media are disseminating information on the possibility of departure from the city, accommodation in temporary assembly areas and the provision of food, water and medicine.

At 2200 hours on 18 September 2016, approximately another 70 civilians were taken out of militia-controlled areas of Aleppo near Burayj al-Rih.

All civilians were transported by road to temporary accommodation areas prepared in advance in Jibrin (4 kilometres east of Aleppo).

Since 28 July 2016, a total of 878 people, including 92 children and 96 fighters, have been taken out of the eastern part of Aleppo.